THE NATIONAL ERA.

For the National Era PUBLIC MEETINGS AT THE NORTH.

PENOBSCOT COUNTY MISSIONARY SOCIETY. Resolutions passed ununimously at the Fourth Annual Mexicag of the Penolicot County Missionary Association, auxiliary to the American Missionary Association, holden at Bangor, February 22d,

5. Revolved. That the friends of the American Missionary Association have abundant cause for gratitude, and encouragement to labor in the field of their allotment and choice, because of the enings for their efforts God has made for them. and the success he has vouchsafed to those ef forts-especially for the hopeful state of their Mission in Africa, showing that Ethiopia is al-

stretching forth her hands unto God? 6. Resolved, That the exigencies of the parent Association, arising from the new and wide openings for missionary labor constantly disclosing, together with the important fields alreadythough but past-occupied, strongly appeal to every Christian heart, to every friend of missions, by untiring efforts and self-denying sacrifices, as well as by faithful prayers, to aid in carrying forward its great work of enlightening, freeing, and

Resolved, That the success of missionary labors cutnot depend on maintaining Christian union and sympathy with men who hold "the image of God" as property, and their brethren in servile subjection; that, on the contrary, we believe the Gospel must fail of its high triamphs among heather nations, unless it goes forth among heathen nations, unless it goes forth, emancipated, to proclaim the Scripture brotherhood of all men—liberty to captives—the opening of prisons to all parighteously bound.

11. Resolved, That we refer all who have doubt-

ed the safety and expediency of missionaries bringing the Gosnel into direct conflict with the social evils of the countries to which they are sent, to the history of the Mendian Mission, and the recent developments on the Big Boom river

Resolved, That as Christian citizens of a Republic which began its existence by a recogni-tion of the equal rights of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we feel mortified and humbled at the spectacle presented by our National Government; its marshals and their deputies hunting down, entrapping, and arresting with his Cabinet, fulminating proclamations, communiting good citizens quietly to witness the degrading infliction, and to aid in recapturing a solitary negro who, having escaped the slavecatcher, flies to a foreign monarchy to retain that freedom of which he was to be stripped by a summary republican court-the United States In-

13. Resolved, That we bless God for the as surance given us in Ecclesiastes, Chapter 5, verse without that and similar assurances in other words of God, when we see this "oppression of the poor and violent perversion of judgment and justice" in this province, goolly and great as it is, we could not fail to "marvel at the matter," but under that assurance we rejoice that "the Higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they" who oppress by law, and, by instruments of justice, work injus-tice; a Higher who controls and overrules all by a "higher law"-a law to which our first obedie is due, and from the searching judgments of which none can escape.

In the afternoon, the resolutions were taken up separately, discussed, and adopted.

A good portion of the time was spent in devotional exercises; the utmost harmony and good feeling prevailed, and at the close of the meeting upwards of fifty dollars were contributed in aid were adopted

of the parent Association.

Richard Thurston is President of our Association, and George A. Thatcher, Corresponding

PLAINFIELD, ILLINOIS.

Resolutions on the subject of Slavery adopted unant mously by the Fox River Congregational Union, Plainfield, Illinois, January 16, 1851.

In view of the fact that American slavery, while it is producing evils of peculiar enormity in the legislation of our country, does still find a refuge and sanctuary in the churches where it exists, it is therefore-

lation with those involved in this guilt, to withdraw from their fellowship, if it is still cherished or suffered among them.

2. Resolved, That it behooves the managers of

our various benevolent societies, though they may not shandon the South as a field of their labors, yet to make themselves there known as uncompro-mising in their hostility to slavery, and to beware lest by their connivance at its usages they soothe the disturbed conscience of the slaveholder.

3. Resolved, That we regard the late passage of the Fugitive Slave Law as bringing deserved reproach upon the American People. We deem reproach upon the American People. peculiarly unjust, oppressive, and odious, for following reasons:

It is virtually an ex post facto law, punishing as criminals those who may have escaped from bond-

age months and years before its passage.
It denies to PERSONS, subjects of American law the benefits of trial by jury and of the writ of habeas corpus; thus by a violent construction of one clause of our Constitution repealing its most valuable provisions, and dividing that charter of our liberties against itself.
It is a CORKUPT law, offering a bribe to the ju-

dicial authority which administers it-a bribe which mocks that Constitution expressly framed of American justice. It makes the exercise of compassion for and

hospitality to one panting for freedom a statute and punishable crime, thus numbering the plainest Christian duty with the transgressions of

It conflicts directly with the law of God of which we have the letter in Deut, xxiii, 15, 16-'Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him;" and whose spirit pervades the entire word of God, and makes the Bible the manual of the philanthropist: whereby
It offends the conscience of many, who, willing

to be "subject to every ordinance of min for the Lord's sake," fail to discern between two widely different sorts of unjust laws, viz: such as on the one hand are simply injurious and burdensame, whereunto expediency may choose between obedience and the penalty of disobedience, and on the other hand such as are immoral, which no man can, with conscience void of offence, obey.
In fine, contravening, as it does, the law of Na-

ture and the law of God, it is at once vom, and unworthy the sacred name of Law. Void because "no human laws are of any validity if contrary thereto, and such of them as are valid derive all their force and all their authority from this original-Blackstone, Introd., Sec. 2; and unworthy of the name, because of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God; her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the not exempt from her power; both angels and men each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."-Hooker, Eccl. Pol., I, xvi, 8.

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA.

Resolutions of the Reformed Presbytery of Pitts

burgh, on he Fugitive Slave bill. olved, That in the above-mentioned enact ment we see the legitimate workings of the Gov-ernment under a Constitution that guaranties slavery, and protects the slaveholder in the un-just possession of property in his fellow man; and there is thus furnished additional evidence that our position as witness dissenting from this Government, and refusing to incorporate with it, or in any way to recognise it as the moral ordi-nance of God, is the only consistent position that can be occupied by the servants and voluntary subjects of "Messiah the Prince."

2. Resolved, That we are encouraged and shown by the recent action of these judicatories of Christian denominations who have faithfully condemned the law, and warned the people under their care to refrain from aiding in its execution, as evincing that the Church is awakening to a sense of her rights and duties. of her rights and duties, as having, under Christ, a guardian care over the moral as well as the spiritual interests of men, and being under obligation to resist by "the weapons of her warfare which are not carnal, but mighty through God." everything that endangers these interests, though emanating from civil authority. We cannot withhold, however, our expression of regret that condemn at least that part of the Constitution which the law is founded, and from which it sprives its validity. And with regard to other officutories, we are constrained to give utterance of one grief and pain that any Courts claiming is not in the name of Christ should be so faithsee as him see not only to withhold their disapperhasion of this law, but to allow the people un ther factor care to act in relation to it, according is their swa convictions, as members of the ash and as majests of the Government, thus

leaving it to their discretion whether they will obey God or man.

Resolved, That while we have no apprehension that any of our people will so far forget their duty to God and to their neighbor as in any way to sid in the execution of this unrighteous law, or be less ready than before to feed and clothe and shelter the fleeing captive, and to speed him in his flight to a place of freedom and safety, we nevertheless declare, that to be de-terred by a human penalty from doing any of the above offices of kindness and duty to those from whom this unnatural bill would compel us to "shut up our bowels of compassion," would be highly aggravated sin against God. "Fear not

them which kill the body?—Matt. x, 28.

4. Resolved, That should this most oppressive penalty be inflicted on any for doing what our Saviour declares he will make the test of the rightcons at the day of judgment, it will be in violation of the sacred rights of conscience, and as truly persecution as was ever suffered under the most intolerant Pagan or Papal despetism. I was hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me. Inascruch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matt. xxv, 35, 36, 40,

THOMAS SPROULL, Adopted : Alleghory, Oct. 11, 1850. Pres. Clerk.

BETHEL, WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENN. The Proceedings of a Meeting held in Bethel Church,

Monbers of the Camberland Presbyterian Church. The meeting was organized by appointing Rev. John Cary, Chairman, and William M. Evans,

Secretary.

The meeting was then opened with prayer by the Rev. Cary, after which the object of the meet-

On motion, Rev. S. Wingel, Rev. J. H. D. Henerson, Rev. J. C. Thompson, Jonas Cooper, and Isaac Connet, sen, being appointed a committee on business, reported a preamble with resolutions,

(We omit the preamble, anxious to save room) Resolved, That it is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery both with the dictates of humanity and religion has been demonstrated and is generally seen and neknowledged, to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors to as speedily as possible efface or wipe out this blot from our holy religion.

 Resolved, That, recognising the great princi-ples taught by Jesus Christ, that the world is the fugitive slaves; its courts and their commissioners brushing up and refitting their manacles, and restoring them, not to liberty, but—to slevery; and its Chief Executive, after long vigils geographically bounds moral obligation and Chris-

3. Resolved, That, in view of the pro-slavery character of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, with which we are connected, we cannot, in fidebity to God, the Church, and the oppressed slave, refrain from expostulating with the holding members of our church, and urging them to remember those whom they are holding in boudy as bound with them, and to break every

yoke, and let the oppressed go free. 4. Resolved, That we will prepare and circulate petitions or memorials in the bounds of the Pennsylvania Presbytery, to be presented to the next General Assembly of our Church, praying her to take at least incipient steps for the final re-moval of slaveholding from her communion.

5. Resolved, That we most carnestly request all the members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church composing the Pennsylvania Synod, who believe slaveholding to be anti-christian, to cooperate with us in this important work.

6. Resolved, That the proceedings of this meet-

ing be signed by the officers, and that the editors of the National Era Cumberland Presbyterian. and all others friendly to the cause, be requested to publish them.

The above resolutions, after being discussed,

Rev. Henderson, Rev. Winget, Rev. Thompson, O Cozad, and Isaac Connet, sen., were ap-pointed a committee to carry out the spirit of the Rev. Winget, Rev. Axtell, Rev. Thompson,

and Rev. Henderson, were appointed a committee to correspond with others friendly to the cause. The meeting then adjourned. JOHN CARY, * Chairman. WILLIAM M. EVANS, Secretary.

* I objected to the above proceedings, as a whole; doubt-* I objected to the above proceedings, as the present time.

J. CARY.

THINGS IN WISCONSIN.

favorably to freedom. The triumphant reelection of Messrs. Durkee and Doty has disappointed the old hunkers of both parties. The Free Soil Whigs, as well as the Free Soil Democrats. aided in their reelection. The result is a tri-umph of free principles in this State.

The failure of O. Cole of reelection was not owing to any objection to the man or the principles he sustained in Congress. On the contrary, as a man he is highly esteemed, and as a Representative he has given almost universal satisfac-tion. But his defeat was mainly owing to his absence from the State, (occasioned by sickness.) and to the extraordinary efforts made by the friends of Ben. C. Eastman, the Democratic candidate.

pledges himself wholly and fully to the following

The abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. 2. To vote for the Wilmot Proviso to the Territories belonging to the United States.

3. To vote against the admission of any more slave States. House who will not so organize the committees as to give freedom its due influence in the business J. W. SHARP

of legislation. Door Creek, Wit., Dec. 16, 1850.

Tr As our space is limited, we must content ourselves with the publication of the communication, which will sufficiently show the sentiment of the People of Madison county .- Ed. Era.

MADISON COUNTY, N. Y. In this county all parties last fall pledged them selves cheerfully enough to go for the repeal of the odious Fugitive Slave Law. There is a de-

termination, in spite of the express and unjust commands of Webster, Cass, & Co., to redeem that Enclosed you have a circular that will indicate

what we are doing. The names to the address are citizens well known in the county, and many f them beyond it, as partisans; and are composed of about an equal number of Whigs and Demo-crats. Over forty sets of petitions are now in circulation in the county. Every nineteen out of twenty sign cordially whenever the petitions are presented. So it would be all over the North (out of the large cities) if only a few in each county would but start the movement. If you should think the petitions and circular

of importance enough (coming as they do from Duer's district) to appear in the Era, it would help us. It might induce similar efforts elsewhere. Very truly and obediently, yours, SAMUEL S. ABBOTT.

Hamilton, January 27, 1851.

MORROW COUNTY, OHIO.

At a meeting of the citizens of Bennington Morrow county Ohio, convened according to previous notice at the Wesleyan meeting-house, Thomas Hance, Esq, was called to the Chair, and B. Johnson was chosen Secretary.

The following preamble and resolutions were

adopted unanimously: Whereas our Representative in Congress, the Hon. Charles Sweetzer, did in this house, and in the presence of a large portion of this audience, express a decided opposition to the Fugitive Slave law; and whereas he did at the same time pledge himself, if elected, to make every effort in his power to check the encroachments of slavery upon the rights and liberties of his constituents; and whereas his election was secured by thus enlisting the friends of Freedom in his support: Therefore,

Resolved, That in voting against the suspension of the rules of the House to enable Mr. Julian to present a memorial of anti-slavery Friends of Indiana, and move its reference to a committee, with instructions to report a bill for the repeal of the Fugitive Slave law, he has not only violated his pledges to his constituents, but has given evidence of an unholy and disgraceful alliance with the slaveholders of the South, to prevent the question of repeal from coming to a direct vote in that

however degraded their condition, should be suf-fered by an enlightened people to become the victims of the Fugitive Slave law, except it be that class in Congress who have contributed to the passage or continuance of said law, by voting, silence, or desertion; and that we will in no case (with the above exceptions) assist in carrying out the provisions of said law.

office of trust or honor, whether under the State or General Government, whose previous acts and long-established principles are not a sufficient guarantee that he will oppose the Fugitive Slave law, and every other encroachment of the slave

WARREN AND MERCER COUNTIES, ILL. At a large and respectable meeting of the citizens of Warren and Mercer counties, lilinois, assem-

sion of Congress.

A spirited and eloquent address was delivered by Mr. Simpson, of Oquawka. A petition to Con-gress, praying for the repeal of the law, was cir-culated and signed, and another to our State Legislature, praying them to instruct our Senators and request our Representatives in Congress to use all honorable means for its repeal, and persons appointed to circulate further these petitions. A preamble with resolutions was then dis-cursed, and adopted unanimously, with the exception of one vote against the eleventh resolu-

We have room only for a few of the resolu-

Resolved, That as, by the provisions of "the Fugitive Slave law," the question of personal liberty in the case of persons claimed as fugitives from labor, is determined in a summary manner, on exparte testimony, without the privilege of appeal, and before a judge to whom the law offers a bribe to decide in favor of the claimant; and as the said law, to all practical intents and purposes, sus-pends the writ of haleas corpus, therefore we de-nounce it as unjust and tyrannical, inconsistent with free government in general, and with the Constitution of the United States in particular. Resolved, That though we shall admit the right Congress, under the Constitution, to legislate for the recovery of fugitive slaves, we hold it most clear that Congress has no right to legislate for any object except in accordance with the Constitution and also in accordance with the common law, both of which are violated by the law in ques

tion, in the respects above mentioned.

Resolved, That a system requiring the question of personal liberty to be determined in a sum-mary manner, without appeal, and without the opportunity of defence, can be nothing else than a system of despotism. None but tyrants need

such a law.

Resolved, That as the said law renders the for colored people liable to be claimed as fugitives from slavery, by any unprincipled persons, and consequently removes from them the protection of law, therefore it is subversive of the great end of civil Government—the protection of men.

Resolved, That if a law be tolerated which re-

moves the shield of protection from one class of our population, we have no security against the enactment of laws removing it from other classes. In self-defence, therefore, we seek the repeal of this law. Resolved, That this law ought to be, and we

demand that it be, unconditionally repealed. Resolved, That members of Congress who supported this law, and voted for its passage, are unfaithful guardians of liberty, and unworthy of public confidence.

Resolved, That we consider no man worthy of

the votes of freemen, for places of trust under our Government, who does not declare himself opposed to this law.

Resolved, That the editors of the Mammouth

ANIEL RODGERS, Chairman. WILLIAM STEWART, Secretary.

For the National Era. THE EDITOR OF THE UNION AND THE HIGHER LAW.

To the Editor of the National Era: It is seldom nowadays that I see the Washington Union. But a stray copy of it fell into my hands lately—that of December 28, 1850. Its defences of the "Fugitive Slave Law" attracted my attention, and led me to write this article, which you may publish or not, as you think best. I begin with a remark or two on the style of the editor of the Union. In an article, in which he notices an editorial of the Western Christian Advocate, he speaks of the editor of that paper, and those who think with him, as "men of and undefinable notions of conscience and morals and religion"—as "half-educated pretenders, with overheated fancies and feeble or perverted reason "-as "shallow pretenders"-as having "neither depth of learning nor strength of rea-son"—as having "neither knowledge, wisdom, nor enlarged common sense," &c. Now, the com-mon sense of the people where I live is just "enlarged" enough to surmise that when a man thus speaks of his opponents, it is because he feels un-able to parry the force of their arguments, unless have an idea that an honorable man, who is conscious of a good cause, is not apt to fail in courte-sy to those with whom he contends in argument.

which, in such a self-sufficient manner, he pronounces them deficient. On the whole, his style etrays a consciousness of a bad cause. As to his matter, how does he dispose of what is said in the article which he reviews—that laws are void which are contrary to natural right, natural justice, the law of God, &c? He tells us that this maxim is applicable in England, but not in this country. Why? Because in England they have no other rule by which to measure the validity of statute laws, but the "general laws of God." &c.—while in this country we have a written Constitution. He admits, it seems, the su-premacy of the law of God in England. Does he mean to say that it is not supreme here also? Or does God reign in England, but not here? I suppose he will also admit that the law of God abrogate its supremacy? Or did it still remain supreme? If the latter, then the Constitution itself is subordinate to it, and must be judged by it. The maxim remains sound, that the Divine law is the standard of human law. The Constitution (being but human law—the supreme law of the land, indeed—but still human law) is like

We think that the editor of the Union, were he conscious of ability to set aside logically the argu-

ments of his opponents, would feel that his own triumph would be all the greater, in proportion to the credit he allowed them for the qualities of

everything human, to be measured by the Su-But if the former, then the Constitution takes the place of the law of God, and becomes supreme in its stead. Indeed, he expressly claims this much, for he says: "The Constitution in this country takes the place of this pretended higher law, and acknowledges no law higher than itself." Is this "higher law" then a pretence? Is he an Atheist? But he has himself admitted it in England. Will he tell us at what degree of longitude its jurisdiction stops? If the Constitution take the place of the law of God, then it must claim its attributes. It must claim perfection or infallibility, for these are attributes of the Divine law. The supreme law must be, like the Supreme Being, perfect and infallible. Here, then, we have the absurdity of an instrument framed by men, each of whom was imperfect and fallible, claiming to perfect and infallible. We have heard much of a claim to infallibility in the Church of Rome, but this is the first time that I remember to have heard of civil society claiming infallibility. But is it true that the Constitution "acknowl-

edges no law higher than itself?" Does it not pro-vide for its own amendment? Does not this suppose imperfection, and acknowledge a higher rule according to which it may need to be amended?

But what are we to think of his declaration, that "if it could be shown that in any of its provisions it (the Constitution) violated the law of God, it might become an interesting question how far it was void for that reason." I ask again, is he an Atheist? Who else could make it a questional transfer of the could make it a question of the could make it a question of the could make it as question of the could make it as questions. tion, whether the enactments of men or the laws of God must give way, when they contradict each

I think I have shown that the Constitution is itself subordinate to the law of God. But I have not said that it needs alteration. The advocates of the Fugitive Slave Law, I observe, assume its constitutionality, meaning by this that it has its origin in power conferred on Congress by the Constitution to legislate for the recovery of fugitive slaves, and then take for granted that it is in all respects conformable to the Constitution. This we deny. We may admit the power of Congress under the Constitution to legislate for this chiest and yet allows. his object, and yet affirm that it is inconsistent with the Constitution in other respects. Congress may have power to legislate for that object, but in doing so may violate other provisions of the Constitution. This, we believe, they have done The Constitution provides that no person shall be deprived of liberty without "due process of law." By what kind of process are persons by this law deprived of liberty? By a process suited to Turkey or Russia, perhaps—a despotie process. Anything else than "due process of law" under a free Government. The Constitution under a free Government. The Constitution guaranties the rights of conscience. This law, in making us the slave-catcher's days, requires us to do what our consciences abhor. It therefore violates the Constitution in these respects. Make

this law and the Constitution agree, and there will probably be little complaint of its violating the "higher law," or requiring us to violate it. the "higher law," or requiring us to violate it. Though there be a law higher—yes, infinitely higher—than the Constitution, there is also a substantial agreement between it and that higher law.

But the editor asks whether, admitting "that an act of Congress was void for violating the 'higher law,' &c., that question is to be determined by each man for himself?" Certainly. Must not every man, as an individual moral agent, decide for himself respecting his own duty? If required to obey a given law, who but himself is to decide whether he can conscientiously do it? Must we cease to believe that we are individually accountable to God for our moral conduct?

bled at the Associate Reformed church, in the vicinity of Little York, January 10th, 1851, Aniel Rodgers was called to the Chair, and Wm. Stewart appointed Secretary. The object of the meeting was stated to be the consideration of the "Fuglitive Slave law," passed at the recent session of Congress. might perhaps do in Turkey; it will not take among Christians. What! compel men to do what their individual sense of duty revolts at! If the support of slavery require such a doctrine,

> He admits that the Jews were justifiable in disobeying the law commanding them to slay their children, but denies that there is any analogy between that case and that of the Fugitive Slav Law. "Not the remotest shade of resemblance," he tells us; and those who think there is, he calls "shallow pretenders." Let us see. One of these laws commanded the Jews to kill their children; the other commands us to help to make men slaves. Multitudes in the free States believe the one of these to be a crime as well as the other. Admitting that the first requires the perpetration of the greater crime, it would only follow that the resemblance was incomplete in respect of the degree of enormity. But if, as we believe, the one be a crime as well as the other, then they do resemble each other in their essential features. The essence of the one is the essence of the other, viz: they require men to commit crime. The resemblance is sufficient for all the purposes of our argument. If it was right to disobey the one because it commanded to do wrong, it is right to disobey the other for the same reason. For the law of God forbids all wrong with the same authority. I have no more liberty to commit a small sin (if such a thing could be) than an enormous crime. Human laws can no more make one a virtue than the other.

Now, it would be unbecoming in me to call the venerable editor of the Union a "shallow pretender;" but really it seems "shallow" to say that there is "not the remotest shade of resemblance" between two laws, each of which requires men to commit crime.

The truth is, the editor has made an admission

here fatal to his cause. His correspondent, who replies to Rev. H. W. Beecher, has made the same admission. The latter has justified Peter in dis-obeying the mandate of the Sanhedrim, and Daniel in disobeying that of Darius. They have both admitted that a law is void, and to be dis-obeyed, which requires men to do wrong. On this some principle, we pronounce the Fugitive Slave Law void It is foolish to say that this law does not require the same kind of wrong, or forbid the same kind of duty, as the ones referred to. It is enough that it require any wrong, or hinder us to do any duty. The Divine law, as we have said, forbids all wrong. It is equally foolish to say that a case similar to the Fugitive Slave Law cannot be found in Scripture. The

furnish cases enough to illustrate these princi-ples. The cases referred to by the editor and his correspondent clearly illustrate the principle that no human law is to be obeyed that requires us to sin against God, or forbids us to do our duty to him or our fellow-men. This is the ground on which we stand in opposing the Fugitive Slave Law. This ground will sustain us.

Scriptures are designed to direct us by furnishing general principles of duty, and they usually

Monmouth, Ill., Jan. 15, 1851.

For the National Era. NEW MISSIONARY HYMN.

Abroad in foreign lands, Where noble rivers run Where Egypt's sparkling sands Gleam bright beneath the sur O'er broad Pacific's wave.

On wild Sumatra's plains, Man is to Sin a slave, And bow'd in Error's chains Then go, and spread the light Of learning's blessed day: Dispel the darkness of the night

With Reason's placid ray Go, carry Truth and Love. And Faith and Hope divine, Till o'er the Earth the Sun

DOTTINGS FROM PRAIRIE LAND.

Of Righteousness shall shine!

To the Editor of the National Era : Sin: I purpose to give you, from time to time, part known as the "Prairie State," and the coun-

try adjacent thereto. The Legislature of Illinois adjourned on Monday last, the 17th instant, after an unprecedented-Constitution, fixing the pay of members at two thousands of dollars. The session of 1849 adjourned as soon as the forty days had expired; and the one just closed did not appropriate the whole of the two dollar days. Yet there has been more work done during this short session of a

month and a third than formerly in three and four months at four dollars per day!

The most important bill passed during the session is that incorporating the "Illinois Central Railroad Company." This bill incorporates a number of Eastern Capitalists under the above name, and authorizes the construction of a railroad from the termination of the Illinois and Michigan canal, at Peru, to Cairo, at the junction Michigan canal, at Peru, to Cairo, at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi, with two branches—one to Chicago, and the other to the Mississippi, opposite Dubuque, lows. The capital stock of the Company is fixed at \$1,000,000, with liberty to increase to an amount sufficient to complete the road; while the lands donated for that purpose by Congress are also granted to the Company, under certain well-guarded restrictions. The bill provides that, after the completion of the road and branches the Company, the control of the road and branches the Company is to the test of the road and branches the Company is to the control of the road and branches the Company is to the control of the road and branches the Company is to the control of the control of the road and branches the Company is to the control of the the road and branches, the Company is to pay to the State seven per cent. of Rs gross receipts The act to be void unless accepted in sixty days, and unless the road is begun by the first of Jan-uary next. It also provides that the central track shall be completed in four years, and the branches in six years, from the execution of deed of trust of said lands.

of said lands. The bill is regarded with much favor by the press and people of the State, so far as I can learn. Hon. Robert Rantoul, of Boston, passed most of the session at Springfield, operating in behalf of the Company to which the charter is granted. The Holbrook Company had previous-

ly thrown up their charter, granted them at a previous session.

Another important act of the session is the General Banking Law. This bill passed the Senate by a vote of 13 to 12, and the House by a vote of 41 to 29. In the Senate, the parties stood-for the bill, six Whigs, seven Democrats against it, three Whigs, nine Democrats. In the House, the parties were about similarly divided. Numerous petitions from all parts of the State had gone up, asking for the passage of a Banking Law, and it is supposed that the people will sus-tain it. But, as the new Constitution requires that the people shall take a vote on it before it becomes a law, there is a chance that it may yet be defeated. The knowing ones say that it is a good law, and that it will be sustained.

good law, and that it will be sustained.

A very important messure has also passed the Legislature this session, in relatian to the liquor traffic. The bill provides for the repeal of all License laws—prohibits the sale of intexicating drinks in less quantity than a quart—prohibits the sale to persons under eighteen years of age—and prohibits it from being drank on the premises where sold—all under suitable penalties. It also was a single gray nunishable the same as sall. makes giving away punishable the same as selling. The friends of the Temperance Reform

ing. The friends of the Temperance Reform have a strong hope that this law will prove an effective one, and do much good.

A Homestead Exemption law has also been passed this session. It exempts from forced sale and execution a lot of ground and a dwelling thereon, used as a homestead, to the value of one thousand dollars.

Several other bills of minor importance have been passed among which are several Railroad.

Several other bills of minor importance have been passed, among which are several Railroad Charters, and an amendment to the general law concerning Plank Roads. Much interest exists among the people in relation to Railroads and Plank Roads, and strong attempts are being made in various quarters to put them in progress. The Galena and Chicago Railroad is progressing rapidly. The Rock island and Peru Railroad about to be commenced. The Northern Cross, from Quincy to the Illinois, will soon be under contract. Strong efforts are making to bring the Warsaw and Rockford road to the notice of capitalists. Of Plank Roads, several are now in progress on

and Rockford road to the notice of capitalists.
Of Plank Roads, several are now in progress on
both sides of the Mississippi.

The winter has been the mildest that I have
ever known in this region, during a residence of
near fifteen years. The Mississippi has not been
closed, below the Des Moines Rapids, and there
has not been a fortnight in which boats could
not ascent to Keokuk. The temperature has not
been below zero but on two or three occasions,
and then only for a few days each. The weather and then only for a few days each. The weather has been dry, and very little snow.

You will have observed the formal nomination of General Scott for the Presidency by the Whign

of Indiana. I fear the Whigs will render themselves liable to the charge of stealing the Democratic military "thunder." I am not advised of any move made by the Whigs in the Legislature of this State, previous to returning to their homes. Yours, &c. Agricola.

DUELLING BETWEEN MEN AND NATIONS.

BY DR. WILLIAM ELDER.

A duel is a fight between two persons with

n past times it was much in use, under va-

rious forms and upon various grounds and pretences. In our day it gets but little countenance from public opinion, and the laws of most civilized countries declare that the killing of a man in a duel is murder, and shall be punished as such. But the duel was not only allowed in England in early times, but it was actually appointed and employed as a legal method of trial in certain kinds of lawsuits about property, and in criminal charges gen-Indeed, this " trial by battle," erally. was called, was not abolished by law until the rear 1817, though it had not been actually used since the time of Charles the First, or about two hundred years ago. It was intro-duced into English law by William the Conqueror, (in the year 1066,) who brought it with him from Normandy, as a part of that barbarous and superstitious system of military government which he established upon the uins of the ancient Saxon institutions. The Germans, when they were first known to the Romans, had this custom; and among the Goths, in the country now called Sweden, it was, in like manner, a mode of trying suits at law. The first written authority for these judicial combats is found in the laws of Burgundy, A. D. 500. In England for six hundred years, own till a century after the Reformation, the rial by battle was in actual use under the laws of the land. It was resorted to as an appeal to the God of battles." in the belief that he rould give the victory to the party that had he right. The cases tried in this way were of the kinds in which there were some uncertain-ty, or difficuly, or impossibility of settlement y courts and juries upon the usual kinds of vidence and proof—in disputed land titles, for astance. In that early time, written deeds and rills were not in use; and when claims were et up which were so old that the witnesses were dead, or of a kind that the courts could not certainly determine, they were referred to this supernatural sort of decision. In criminal harges, if the offender was caught in the act, he was not allowed his appeal to arms; but whenever there was a doubt, he might chalenge his accuser to decide it by combat. One of the oldest English law-writers justifies this custom by the example of the combat between David, on the part of the Israelites, and Goliath, the champion of the Philistines. So the Bible has been quoted in past times as authorion to get the reputation of a man. Butty for wrong doing, and so it is still perverted and abused in our own day.
In civil cases—that is, in suits about proprry—the battle was not fought by the parties in the next number.

to the suit, but by their champions, hired or otherwise obtained for the purpose. It is very likely that bullies were hired then as lawyers are now-to beat each other, only in a different way-a hard head then, a well-filled one now-stout arms then, a nimble tongue now; and, in both, willingness to fight for either side of any case. In criminal cases, the combat was required to be in person, and not dy attorney or champion, which means the same thing. But if either the accused or accuser were a woman, a priest, or under twenty-one years of age or over sixty, or lame or blind, such person might refuse the challenge, and have the case tried by a jury.

When the battle was appointed and the com-batants entered the field, they took an oath in which each declared that his cause was just; and where the champions fought for hire, they took the same oath, and furthermore swore that they used no magic, sorcery, or enchantment. The precise words of this last declara-tion were these—" Hear this, ye justices, that I have this day neither eat, drank, nor have upon me neither lone, stone, nor grass, nor any enchantment, sorcery, or witchcraft, whereby the law of God may be abased, or the law of the devil exalted. So help me God and

his saints. The judges attended these legal combats in their robes of office, that they might witness cordingly. But the battle was not fought with deadly weapons, and death seldom ensued. Each party was furnished with a baton or staff an ell long, (about four teet,) and a four cornered leathern target for defence. If the defendant in the action could maintain his defence till the stars appeared in the evening, or dollars per day for the first forty days, and one killed his antagonist, or forced him to yield and dollar per day for every day thereafter, has cry "craven," his defence was judged com-already worked wonders, and saved the people plete. If he yielded, or was killed, his case plete. If he yielded, or was killed, his case was decided against him. In criminal charges, if the accuser killed the accused, it was taken for the decision of Providence; or if he pressed him so hard that he could not or would not fight any longer, he was condemned, and punshed forthwith as guilty. On the other hand, if the accuser was conquered, he was pronounced infamous, and could never be a juror or a witness in any case afterwards, because, as it was said, he had sworn to a falsehood, and charged an innocent man with a crime.

All the reasoning for this trial by battle, or legal duel, turned upon the presumption that in the kind of cases where human judgments were doubtful, the Divine Providence would decide the appeal as the real justice of the case required. Wars between different nations, and armed rebellions against despotic Governments, rest upon the same notion of putes where there are no earthly courts or judges to decide between the parties. The trial by battle is the way that nations "go to law" now. One would think that the result of wars being so often manifestly against the right, and in favor of the wrong, the world would give up this superstitious notion; but it is, nevertheless, true that the weaker side at least, and the oppressed party, in all wars and revolutions, always take up arms in some confidence that the "God of battles" will somehow fight for the right. And curiously enough, too, even where the opposed armies are of the same religion, and even of the same nation also, they have clergymen, called army chaplains, who daily make public prayers to these preachers in the opposite camps could be brought together into one prayer meeting, each party calling upon the Supreme Being for the overthrow and destruction of the other, they would appear to us as they must appear to the angels. Good angels must weep and evil angels laugh at such a sight.

The revolutionists all over Europe, in the years 1848 and 1849, went to battle against kings and tyrants in this belief of the Divine assistance in killing their oppressors. Yet they were everywhere beaten by the superior force of their enemies, or by divisions and treachery among themselves.

So far as we have been considering the duel between individuals and between nations, in the cases where it is either believed or pretended that Heaven will decide the trial according to justice, we need add no words to show how idle and foolish such a faith is. The words of ous to Peter in the Garden of Getaseman are his answer to this whole question-"Put up thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." He would not employ or authorize one man to take the life of another. He that enjoins the forgiveness of injuries and the love of enemies can never help us to kill them. Besides, He adds that he has "more than twelve legions of angels" at his command, if he wished to destroy men's lives, (Mathew xxvi, 52, 53.) But the duel now has not the hardihood to call itself anything better than honorable re-

risk to both parties. It is no longer resorted to on any pretence that God will take part in the norrible struggle, and decide for the right, but it is undertaken in open defiance to the laws of

enge, or murder with fair play, and an equal

This is bad enough and wicked enough, and more so than one could think reasonable human beings could be guilty of; but it is sometimes, perhaps always, more or less mean or coward-ly, as well as brutal and bloodthirsty. More than one challenge has been given and accept-ed, and many a duel has been fought, too, in which one or both of the parties has felt as much of fear as of malignity. Duels arise in this way: Some one, having too little regard for justice or truth or good manners to govern his tongue

truth and justice which threaten him with open deadly weapons, according to some established rules, for the purpose of deciding a quarrel. shame, and this fear takes away all the proper manliness of his daring. Audacity is not bravery, for it is blind and unprincipled, and will not support a man one moment in the presence of light and truth. But the innocent and injured party in quarrel may be a good and true man. Yes, and he will remain so until feelings of revenge and thoughts of murder drown out his better nature, and make him fierce, selfish, and reckless of right and duty. Can a good man consent to kill one whom a wife or child or parent

and intentions, in the approbation of the good and wise, and in the Divine support. But the wrong-doer has none of these reliances, and he

can have nothing but mere animal hardihood

to maintain him against the natural fear of

loves, however unworthy that one may be Can a good man disobey all rightful authority Can a good man be absolutely relentless and cruel? Alas! when the demon of revenge and blood takes possession, he drives out every virtue and every feeling that enters into the char acter of a brave man; for where all law is de fied, there is no respect left for honor or fair play, and the maddened monster will take all the advantages which cowardice itself asks against a foe. Moreover, in nine cases out of ten, one or both the persons engaged enter into it, not willingly, but by a force which he has not quite courage enough to resist. He is really more afraid of the character of coward than of the little risk of a fight. Some bad friend, who cares nothing for another's risk, tells him that he must fight, and he suffers himself to be bullied into it. He sends a challenge or accepts one in the hope that the quarrel may be made up before the fatal meeting or, at the worst, after an ineffectual shot has been exchanged. In a word, he gets into it as other people commit other crimes-with a blind hope that the worst consequences may be somehow escaped. And, then, there is the hope of getting credit for the very thing he most wants—courage. Oh, how anxious the coward is for a character. So between the force of fools' opinions, which are strong with him, and the chance of escape, which is quite promising, and the prospect of a brag affair, the poor fellow will manage to pick up as much extemporaneous pluck as might help him to be hanged pretty decently if he happened to be going to the gallows instead of the field of honor. In favorable circumstances, with everything to help and everybody looking on, the most shabby fellows generally contrive to make a tolerable show of themselves. There is always and everywhere a grand difference between the lofty daring that becomes a man, and the poor counterfeit appearance that is put have a story to tell that will show up this matter better and more pleasantly than we can do in a dull argument. Our readers shall have it PROGRESS PAMPHLETS.

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From the President of Amherst College, the celebrated Pro-

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